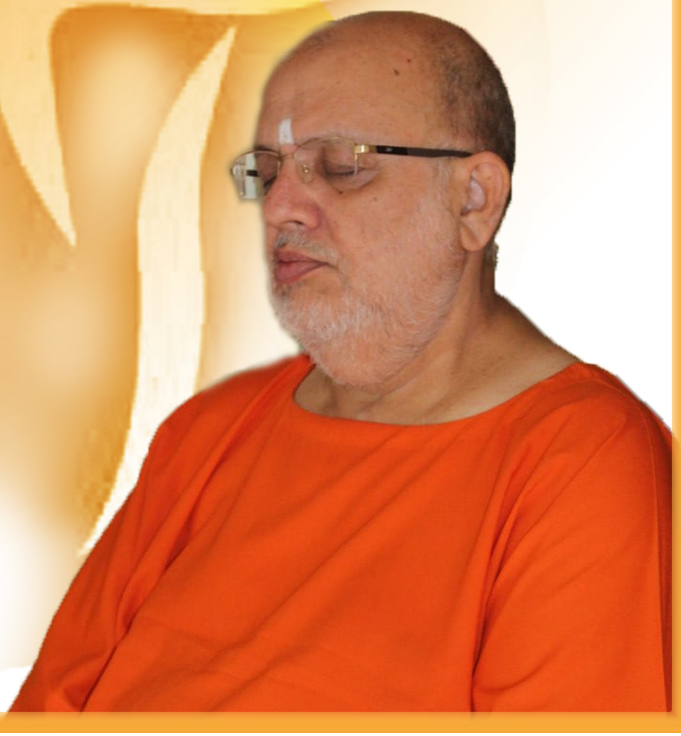
VEDANTA ARTICLES

H. H. Swami Atmananda Saraswati

Part : 6

अहं ब्रह्मास्मि



Published bY:
Vedanta Mission
www.vmission.org.in

CONTENTS

01 - 07 Day & Night

08 - 14 Yogi & Dharma

15 - 23 Two Nishtha's

24 - 33 Aishana - Traya

34 - 39 Believe it to See it

40 - 45 Mithyachara

46 - 51 Karma Yoga in Action

52 - 65 Mind is like a Field

61 - 66 Vidit & Avidit

67 - 76 Dhyan in Gita

Yogi & Dharma

Yoga is Samatvam

Gita defines Yoga as the capacity to retain equanimity in any ups & downs of life. 'Samatvam Yoga Uchyate'. whether a situation is cordial or uncordial, a Yogi (as defined in Gita) has no emotional elation nor any dispondency even while the person is fully sensitive to the situation. This is obviously a great

quality to have. Firstly there are no setbacks, anxieties, depressions etc for such a person. No fears, the world is never a problem for a Yogi. He / She has as though insulated himself from all potential problems which the world can ever give. Secondly it is these people alone who continuously learn from every situation. Others dissipate their energy in baseless and endless reactions, and therefore miss the opportunity to learn. Bhagwan says that anyone wishing to know the truth of any situation or themselves need to first have this capacity of 'Yoga'. He says Brahma-Gyan is a cake-walk for a Yogi, and never ever possible for a Non-Yogi.

Arjuna not ready for Atma-Gyana

No wonder Krishna did not see Arjuna, who was a devout & religious person, to be ready for Self-Knowledge yet. At the spur of the moment

YOGI & DHARMA

Arjuna got totally disinterested in victory, kingdom or anything of the sort because the victory involved killing our own near & dear ones. The very thought of losing these respectable people brought shivers down his spine. Extraneous situations shook him badly. He was a complete anti-thesis of an ideal Yogi. No Yogi, no Brahma-Vidya. So Bhagwan advised Arjuna to first have the capacity to observe any situation without any emotional upheavals. The description of Arjuna in the first chapter was a scene completely contrary to this fundamental requisite.

Happiness & Sorrow

If everything is basically Brahman alone, then how can any situation ever give sorrow to anyone anywhere. If sorrow comes then either the statement that everything is

divine is fundamentally wrong, or our sorrows are baseless & imaginary. Understanding happiness has to be an extremely important part of education. It is so very fundamental to our existence, but unfortunately no educational institute ever tells us the secret of happiness. Can we pin-point anything in the world as universally potent to definitely give sorrow to anyone. No. It is all so relative. Our diseases do give us pain but we know that pain is a humble request by our body to give special attention to some part of our body.

Anything which is as per our likes gives us happiness. Personal cordiality is joy. Even our near & dear ones sitting on the same dining table react & respond differently to same dishes. Reactions vary from wow to oh-no. Same things invoke different emotions, simply

because likes & dislikes vary. If we 'see' this fact then we can confidently say that there is nothing in the world which universally gives happiness or sorrow. In fact the world is made up of inert matter which never gives us happiness or sorrow.

The Funny Game of Life

Life is a funny game indeed. We first imagine something as a source of happiness or sorrow and then run after it. Our aspirations, dreams & desires are most often based on these imaginations & suppositions. We follow not truth but our imaginations. We respond to situations as per our imaginary & baseless likes & dislikes. When the majority of people share some common 'like' then it tends to become the truth. Life and responses based on our likes & dislikes come to an end for a Yogi. Just

visualize the world from the point of view of a Yogi. Everything has its beauty & uniqueness, but nothing ever brings special happiness or sorrow. Things just are what they are. God has created nature where every vee-bit has some important role to play in the conservation & existence of totality.

Dharma

When likes & dislikes rule to roost, then responses to the world outside is definitely as per our personal whims & fancies of what gives happiness & sorrow to us, however, in the case of a Yogi when he clearly sees that nothing ever gives happiness or sorrow, than a very important question comes in our minds. How does a Yogi respond? If everything is a same matter, then how come there are different responses to different situations? Here

YOGI & DHARMA

comes what we call as Dharma. Just as in our day to day life we can respond to situations as per our likes or dislikes, or we can respond not as per our personal likes but as per facts. We can live in a society prompted by our whims & fancies or follow that which is righteous for all. This life which is based on facts, based on universal righteousness - is called a Life of Dharma. Every country has its code of conduct, its laws & constitution. No one is free to do what they like. That is the difference between a life of a Yogi and an ignorant man. Inside Yogi is at peace, and outside lives as per Dharma. Yoga and Dharma always go hand in hand. One cannot be possible without the other.

Om Tat Sat

DAY AND NIGHT

yani & Agyani

We are not talking about the chronological time / day & night here, but are referring to the words used by Bhagwan Sri Krishna when he talks about the striking difference between the perceptions of a Sthitha-Pragnya and an ordinary man of the world who is ignorant about his/her adhyat-

mic truth. Their difference is nothing less than the contrast between day & night (BG: 2/69). The perceptions of an Atma-Gyani (as revealed in Advaita Vedanta) are literally unimaginable for an ordinary person who still takes him/her self as a Jeeva - an individual, just as it is unimaginable for a dreaming person to appreciate his/her truth of & in the waking state.

Sthitha-Pragnya

Before we bring to our mind as to who exactly is a Sthitha-Pragnya, let us see the perceptions of an ordinary person of the world. Our day to day or the so called vyavaharic life exists in duality. We see ourselves as individuals - different from everyone around us, we see a beautiful, infinite and multifarious world around us, we see this extremely orderly & awesome creation and obviously believe in an omniscient and omnipotent creator - the Ishwara. We

see cause & effect processes and have scientific provable appreciation of how things work in the universe. I am different from you and you are different from others. Everyone one is different & unique. The world is different from us and so is God - who exists somewhere out there in the heavens. This is what duality means. We see this realm of existence where the seeker is different from sought, and the seer from the seen. This is the truth of life in this realm with all our religion, science, politics, economics and management skills. Life is a challenge and has literally umpteen problems. Existence here is of primary concern. Everything is so changing and ephemeral, and we have to live and survive in this realm. A Sthitha-Pragnya does not share our perceptions. They appear to be aliens amongst us and live in a different realm all together. There is no duality for them. No

seeker & sought, No seer-seen, no 'fundamental' difference between Jiva-Jagat or Ishwara. For them it is all a manifestation of one truth which is one, non-dual, infinite and that alone is the Self of all. Manifestations are not substantial. They directly appreciate themself as one infinite, timeless self-effulgent existence - the Brahman.

Jagat is Mithya

It is not that the world is not perceptible to such a man of knowledge, but its existence is what is termed as Mithya - having no independent existence of its own. Acharyas give the examples of Mirage or Reflections in Mirrors to show the nature of existence of all perceptible things around. It is seen, but has no independent existence. In fact Mithya things alone are seen. In Mithya alone the difference & duality between the perceiver and the per-

ceived crops in. If the world and its people were not even seen then who would have written the scriptures and revealed the existence of non-dual reality, and ways of waking to that realm. However, these Sthitha-Pragnya do not share any of our priorities and perceptions. As said above these alien-like liberated ones exist in a different realm all together. No wonder Sri Krishna calls the stark difference from them like that of day & night.

Day & Night

The shloka in question says that which an ordinary person does not see or imagine, in that realm a Sthitha-Pragnya is awake. That in which the ignorant ones exist none of that is of any significance for such an enlightened one. Thus the example. In the midst of duality the only way of achieving anything is karma. No wonder the Vedas and thus also the Bhagwad

DAY & NIGHT

Gita motivate us to give out our best in the field of Karma. We need to learn to do every Karma with heart & soul - holistically. There is a special art of doing Karma which assures success & fulfillment and that is the Karma with Yagna spirit in which we should definitely take the guidance of masters who have excelled and are knowledgeable. That is what Vedas are all about. Vedas are pramana, our guiding lights and source of inspiration. Karma is the main self-effort, however when it comes to Sthitha-Pragnya's, they surprisingly have given up Karma all-together. Their realm is beyond the reach of Karma. This is how Sri Shankaracharya talks of the stark difference between a Gyani and a worldly person. The example given by Bhagwan about the day & night is definitely perfectly relevant.

Karma and Beyond

Acharya further says that not only these wise ones are Karma-Sanyasis, but this also implies that now the Vedas are no more a Pramana for them. Interesting discussion regarding the subject is there in the commentary of Shankaracharya on the shloka in question. The Vedas are at one time great motivators for action, their priority is not only extraneous excellence but also inner purification, and then these very Vedas slowly take us beyond Karma into the realm of Self-Knowledge by deep enquiry and meditations. Then alone the timeless truth of life is realized as our very Self and also the Self of all. Then they are truly awakened ones.

Om Tat Sat

AISHANA-TRAYA

True Fulfillment

Aishana means intense aspirations or desires, and a fulfilled person means that they are fulfilled and contended in themselves and by themselves, and therefore do not have any desires. This may sound logical perfect but practically the ways of the world are just contrary to these requisites.

Ways of the World

Desires are plans of our minds to make us fulfilled by getting things of our needs & comfort. Our happiness supposedly depends on acquiring a comfort zone which is prosperous, respectable and as per our dreams. That is the ways of the world, so obviously true fulfillment is so evasive and rare. In one there is no dependence whatsoever and in the other there is total dependence on things outside. If the smallest things gets disturbed and hay-wire off goes our fragile happiness and we are full of stress and anxieties. Great thinkers assure us that howsoever challenging it may sound yet one should be positive about the possibility of attaining true & lasting fulfillment - the Moksha.

AISHANA-TRAYA

Understanding Desires

Let us begin by understanding the range of our desires. Sages do this awesome classification and tell us that broadly speaking our desires are of three kinds. These are called Aishana-traya - the three aishana's. They are Vitteshana (desire for wealth), putreshana (desire for progeny) and the third is lokeshana (desire for love & respect).

- Vitteshana is not only wealth, money and property, but basically it is desire for security. As wealth assures fulfillment of all our desires and assures handling of all exigencies, so equating wealth with fulfillment of needs, independence and a sense of security, we all have clear-cut goals for financial security.

AISHANA-TRAYA

- Putreshana is aspiration for progeny or children. This obviously assures continuity of our lineage and family by rearing future generation with our values and perceptions. When we say aishana then it implies intense desire, rather attachment for children, and is we are somehow unable to get them then there is a profound lack or vacuum in our lives. For children there have to be both men & women so this desire includes these relationships and the physical & emotional bond between them. No wonder sensual gratifications is such a big issue.

- Lokeshana is intense desire for name & fame, respect and love without which we lack something fundamental and therefore there is intense dependence on this. This wish for love & respect is from our family, friends and more so from the world at large.

AISHANA-TRAYA

Intense Desire is Aishana

Let us be clear that having desires for wealth, children and respect is not aishana. As seen above all these three are fundamental need of a heathy, normal & a social person, but we use the word aishana only when these become our prime focus and dependence. All these have role to play and there is nothing wrong with any of them but in some cases there is a kind of cancerous growth in their intensity, then it becomes our prime focus and consideration and is then called as our aishana. Without them we remain insecure and incomplete, which is untrue and need not be so.

Desires transform into Aishana

It is interesting to note how normal desires get transformed into aishanas. This

happens when means become ends. When we equate these extraneous cordialities into prescription for lasting and true happiness. When desires get transformed into aishanas then it is like getting some cancer. Cancer indicates uncontrollable growth of some parts and also having the capacity to infiltrate all parts of our body. Definitely this kind of desires become more of a handicap rather than cordiality. That which can potentially become an aishana is initially an object of our prayers and dreams to lead a positive & productive life. In fact to lead an independent and good life we do need all these cordialities. Lest we make the means as ends, we obviously need to be clear of the nature of 'end', or the way to true & lasting fulfillment.

AISHANA-TRAYA

Bandhan & Moksha

How do we attain Moksha? If Moksha being contended in oneself by oneself, then obviously the real end is to intimately and clearly know and realize our real & true self, knowing which there is total contentment. This is a far cry from our present day perceptions about our self, so a very deep self-introspection is the way to go. So we need to create basic cordialities in life to lead a healthy and productive life and thereafter introspection and meditation. However, not getting any guidance and motivation for such a life our healthy and normal desires get transformed into aishanas and we not only miss the real goal but get umpteen anxieties and problems.

The Secret of avoiding Cancer

As we follow the healthy Art of Living, specially the Gita way of living, our lives will be all the more productive and fulfilled. We will not only be blessed with a fine intellect but also will get all the essentials of human life to live a good life, namely our desires for wealth, progeny and respect. As we get all these things in bundles then we need to be all the more careful of increasing our dependence on these fundamentals. We basically cannot avoid wealth, love and respect, but need ways & means by which we remain insulated. So all those who advise us to completely avoid the so called Kanchan, Kamini and Kirti are telling something impractical. What we rather need to learn is to truly see these are fruits of good values and actions and focus on them

alone. That is the essence of Karma Yoga. So Karma Yoga is the way to keep focus on the fundamentals of life, even while living in the midst of all prosperity and fame. That is how we keep aishanas at bay and yet lead an intelligent life culminating in self-realization and self-contentment.

Om Tat Sat

Two Nishtha's

Have you ever been in a fix like Arjuna, whether you should go for an action oriented life and try to make our lives and also the world a better place or first try to deeply understand the truth of everything around including ourself? Well, Bhagwad Gita and in fact the whole Vedas have a unique & practical suggestion for us in the form of Two Nishtha principle. Let us explore and try to understand this proposition.

Two Nishtha's

Means & End

Before we go into the 'right means' we need to be first aware of the so called 'end'. True freedom is by appreciating the truth of ourselves and the world around, and then go about living our lives. Ultimately it is the Self-Knowledge which matters most. Not knowing the truth we imagine ourself to be limited, incomplete and insecure, and then all our endeavors are directed to basically bring about our security and fulfillment and also the well-being of our near & dear ones. The realization that deep-down we are neither incomplete nor insecure changes the entire paradigm. Thus the paramount importance & priority of Self-Knowledge.

Not knowing the real truth we all live with deep-rooted presumption of our own

insecurities and incompleteness. Everything else is built upon that presumption. If the very foundation is flimsy & false then we literally waste our entire life and the whole subsequent structure most often does not sustain, and may even fall like a pack of cards.

Self-Knowledge is door to Moksha

If Self-knowledge is the door to Moksha, true freedom & lasting fulfillment, then obviously our life needs to be geared for this goal. Whatever is required for 'this' needs to become our goal & priority. This includes our thoughtful, and highly intelligent mind, the right kind of environment and people around. The most important is our awakened & compassionate Guru, from whom we come to know the entire Art & Science

of Self-Knowledge. Such a person has no other goal & agenda. Obviously they need to be very healthy and capable of a simple contemplative life. If at all we already have such a mind-set, such goal and Guru, then we are ready to take-off and be totally free to take on life as it comes. However, most of the time this is not so.

Preparations for Gyana

Our mind is highly influenced by our surround & world, so as we grow up most often the perceptions and the subsequent aspirations of the common people of the world get deeply ingested & imbibed in us. The fundamental conclusions of ourselves and our life is based on perceptual realities and if that is taken on face-value then we land up with baseless & untrue conclusions

of life, and then the seeking's of life are endless because we basically pursue mirages. So our starting point is never a clean, inquisitive & a thoughtful mind, but rather a highly conditioned, brain-washed and extrovert mind. Such people have no questions for self-knowledge nor even to know the truth of life. They think that they know it all, and all what needs to be done is acquisition of their aspired things. So Karma is the way to go.

The first realization which needs to come is to deeply see that extraneous configurations never satiate. Inspite of everything we continue to seek, we remain insecure the basic disease continues to linger. It is only when we realize that we do not know the real truth that there is humility

and motivation to re-visit our perception. The real beginning is with the manifestation of realization of our ignorance and then the inquisitiveness to know the truth can exist.

Cleansing the Mind

In the process of our quests outside, we gather lot of deep likes & dislikes. These likes & dislikes are terrible forces. Thereafter we are never free to do or not to do, but are forced to do what our conditioning propel us to do. Many things may be fine but overall the capacity to be free while pursuing anything is the mark of a truly intelligent person. Freedom implies the capacity to do or not to do, or do it differently. This is the beginning of a life of freedom and pursuit of knowledge. Freedom is not from action but in action. The agendas however changes.

Two Nishtha's

Initially while action our agenda was acquisition of things outside, sensual gratifications etc, but for a person who realizes that extraneous things are never too much of an issue then priority becomes invocation of creativity, originality and better wisdom. With this starts the first Nishtha as propounded by Bhagwan in Bhagwad Gita and this was initially propounded in the Upanishad portion of Vedas. Let us go into these Nishtha's.

Two Nishtha's

1. Be a Yogi: Bhagwan says that if your mind is open, thoughtful, creative then you need to aspire for a very intelligent mind. Don't leave the work field but work rather for this goal. He calls it a mind of a Yogi. Such a person and his/her mind is tested in the very field of action and all its challenges. Equa-

nimity in all the situations is the touch word. Such a mind is called a pure mind, a sattvic mind, a clean mind etc. The way forward in your work field or in your life-knowledge is with this kind of mind alone. They acquire and polish such a mind even when they keep on attaining heights outside or may-be while facing problems. Every situation is a blessing to create & polish a Yogic Mind.

2. Be a Contemplative Sanyasi:

Having acquired a Yogic Mind, one should free oneself from all external agen-das & goals and dedicate oneself to re-visit his/her notions of Self and the world which continue to let us remain limited beings. This is second Nishtha - called Sankhya. The proposition of wise & enlightened people is that deep-down we are not limited beings, but the very essence of life - infinite, imper-

ishable and non-dual. So till be appreciate this directly & intimately this is the way to go. It is a very profound goal and has to be pursued with all the passion & intensity at our command.

World of a Yogi and a Sanyasi

Both these Nishtha's are so unique that they have to be handled one at a time. First accomplish the first by being a Yogi and then we need to keep everything aside, and pursue the second goal with our entire heart & soul. Nishtha word basically means a sense of profound dedication and application of our self-effort. In the first we use the external goals and challenges to retain our equanimity etc, and in the second we completely turn within and explore.

Two Nishtha's

So they cannot be followed together. Like some short session of Self-knowledge in the morning and then goals of the world outside rest of the day. This way we shall never attain the best in any field. So Bhagwan and even Upanishads tell us to tread slowly and handle these one at a time. All those who keep their legs in two boats going in different directions fall flat attaining neither. That's the lesson of Two Nishtha's.

Mithyachara - Way to a Doomed Life

What is Mithyachara?

Mithyachara means an untruthful person. Mithya means false and Acharan means conduct, so here is a person with false or untruthful conduct. Inside the person is one thing, outside the show or presentation is something else. This is a very dangerous condition for the person's evolution and spiritual growth. The mind will nev-

er be free of baseless anxieties and stress. Will never have a peaceful & sattwic mind. As a result there will be negative thoughts & actions, body & mind will be riddles with fears, diseases and Inspite of the fact that the person is doing some bhajans or meditation etc, still there will be no expected results.

Accepting yourself

Journey starts from where we stand. Just as a journey from one place to another starts from where we live & stay, so also our adhyatmic journey, which basically means the beautification of our minds and ultimately having a valid self-perception, has to start from what we are today. Right or wrong, Lets accept what we are today. Our aspirations could be from any source

but the fact is we have been deeply influenced by some aspirations. So lets face it and begin from here alone. If I stay in Indore in Central part of India and I have to go to Kedarnath, so obviously I will have to plan my journey from there. Why compare with a person living at a closer place like Rishikesh. No emulation, no comparison. Learn from all but finally start from where you stand.

Open up with your Guru

It is always difficult to open our hearts completely & truthfully with anyone. Many a times we are not transparent even with our near & dear ones too. We strive to present our positive sides, even though that may require efforts. However, there should be someone in your life with whom we are truly transparent & truthful. Let no ego's come

in there and be yourself, however confusion-riddled we may be. That is the role of a Guru in your life. Obviously the Guru has to be compassionate and knowledgeable, we can't accept any person as our Guru. It is just like opening up with your doctor. If you cant open with with your doctor how will he/she ever help us. So look out for a knowledgeable and compassionate person, slowly get near and confide, that will truly be a good beginning. Everyone in the world is born ignorant and from ignorance arise all sort of delusions, confusions and negativities, so it is never a surprise for a Guru to see some negative thoughts in someone, in fact they are very happy that here is someone who is at least accepting the fact that I have some moha and they will definitely guide the person forward.

Have faith in positivity & goodness

Let there be any confusion, but deep down in your heart let there be full faith and confidence that every person can be peaceful, thoughtful, naturally positive - sattwic. If you believe it you can wake up to that state. If you sincerely believe you can be healthy then a doctor can definitely help you, not otherwise. Realize that negative thoughts and aspiration have come to you from ignorant people and learn to drop them, on merits and by proper understanding. In this process start from where you stand today. You are the creator of your own prakruti or nature. Prakruti is something which has trickled deep down in our psyche, so the way to go is to accept that and start with a difference.

Gita Way

Bhagwad Gita advises that whatever is our prakruti one should live as per that. It is easy, effortless and involves the entire heart & soul. But how to live with a difference? Bhagwan advises that do what you wish to do, but to help & serve others, meaning selflessly. Motivation was just to live in a particular field and way. Do it but just learn to do selflessly, with love, for the well-being of others. What is wrong is just that petty egoistic attitude and not the action itself. So turn your aspiration into a blessing for others. That's the way to go. Live fearlessly, live lovingly, live as per what you are. Mithyachara is the way to a doomed life.

Om Tat Sat

Believe it to See it

hould we first see something to believe in it, or first believe in something to open the gates of its direct realization. This is an extremely important question and normally the scientists prefer the former proposition and the adhyatmic vouch for the latter.

Believe it to See it

The Two Vada's

When it comes to some existing 'objective' facts then seeing first is the rule of the game, but when it comes to subtle aspects of life, then the latter is the way to go. For this we need to first understand one more truth. Do we see the creation because it is there or do we see the creation because we are seeing it. This is discussed as 'Drushti-Srushti Vaad' or its opposite - the Srushti-Drushti Vaad'.

Drushti-Srushti Vaad

The Drushti-Srushti Vaad means that like in our dream the creation depends on the seer. It is the projection of the seer. It is only in our minds and has no external existence. It is a personal world and lasts only till the seer is engrossed & fascinated by what

he/she sees. Once the person gets up, it is no more. The person may revel in its memory for some time, then it fades away because the world outside overtakes our attention and importance. As though God has given our Dream-State for this comparison and appreciation that our 'world of experience' can be a personal creation and literally a world of imagination. As long as the dream continues so long it is so very real, but after 'waking-up' it slowly fades away and we just smile it away. Some thinkers say that this waking state has so many parallels with our dream state that basically it is also a bigger dream. That which comes & goes is all anitya and is thus a dream. Even here one thing gives joy to one and sorrow to the other, because perceptions depend more on the values of the experiencer. All teachers

of Vedanta and non-dualists come in this category. They appreciate what is around but no dependences or aversions.

Srushti-Drushti Vaad

The other proposition if that of Srushti-Drushti Vaad, which says that the creation is very much there. It is real, it came up at a particular point in time and will continue to exist. We see it because it is there. Most of the scientists fall in this category. They observe, explore and even dissect the things around. In the process they discover various facts about the creation and design better technologies depending on their discoveries and help humanity too. However the truth for them lies yonder and not within.

Vedanta believes in Drushti-Srushti Vaad

As Vedanta which follows the for-

mer proposition all its sadhanas depend on that basic understanding that mind is like a projector and depending on our values & vasanas we project our world. Now if we base our sraddha on the fact that basically 'I' the Atma is full & transcendental - the so called Brahman, and the world is as per our Guna's & Karma - then we are empowered to create a world of our choice. If we wish to divinize the world around then it just depends on our deep heartfelt perceptions. Then alone such statements make sense that 'We shall see it if we believe it.'

Sradha becomes extremely important

Our belief basically negates the remnants of the earlier Vada, that the world is real, and thus it starts tremendously empowering us. We could be afraid of something

and later can just root out that fear completely. Such is the power of this paradigm shift. This not only pertains to what we see outside but ultimately it is relevant to our identity and truth. We can live as a limited & perishable entity or wake up to the timeless and the transcendental. Indeed this is revolutionary and definitely a fact - that we can see whatever we believe in, and the story starts with our belief. Believe it to See it.

Om Tat Sat

Mind is like a Field

s we sow, so we reap" - this timeless truth echoes the 13th chapter of the *Bhagavad Gita*, which declares, "This body is called a *Kshetra*, a field." While many traditions, including some within India, claim that destiny is shaped by external forces or divine will, the Vedic sages boldly affirmed that life is an *inside-out* journey. This revolutionary insight - that we are the authors of

our own stories - became the bedrock of *Sanatan Dharma*.

Different Perceptions

Why do some see beauty and divinity in every aspect of life, while others view existence as a battleground of good and evil? Why do some people credit profound human achievements to mysterious aliens, overlooking the potential within? The *Upanishads* clearly proclaim that the entire universe is pervaded by the Divine (as in the *Isha Upanishad*), and the **Mahavakya**s go a step further: *Tat Tvam Asi — That Thou Art*. We are not just small, separate beings but expressions of the limitless Divine itself.

Is a Limited Mind a Handicap?

Yes, we appear as limited individuals. But this limitation isn't a handicap; it is the

very tool we can use to transcend. Right understanding and education can help us recognize our hidden capacities and awaken to the infinite. But how do we move from limitation to liberation? The answer lies in understanding the mind.

Impressions are like Seeds

The mind is consciousness in a manifested form - like a torch illuminating the space of perception, thought, and imagination. It allows us to understand the world and ourselves. We form judgments, develop preferences, and create emotional bonds - all by the mind. These mental impressions are like seeds we plant. They grow into desires, which drive our actions, which in turn shape our experiences. Thus, our joys and sorrows are not imposed by fate; they are

self-created. In truth, we are the masters of our inner world.

Consequence of Likes & Dislikes

At first, this cycle of preference and reaction may seem natural, even harmless. But it comes with a hidden cost. Likes and dislikes don't just shape our emotional landscape - they also bind us. Attachment and aversion narrow our vision, giving rise to fear, anxiety, and internal conflict. Ironically, we use our intelligence to create a limited world and then suffer within it.

Conclusions & Intelligence

Worse still, strong opinions and conclusions halt our intellectual growth. When we decide that something is definitively

good or bad, we stop exploring further. Inquiry dies, and along with it, our openness and humility. Ideally, knowledge should be a path to timeless truth, but instead, we settle for temporary comforts and partial truths. Our limited goals and quick judgments suppress the very intelligence we're meant to cultivate.

Destiny is of our own Making

Over time, this results in a conditioned, reactive mind rather than a reflective, inquisitive one. We may succeed in acquiring what we like, but because all things are perishable, we remain in a constant struggle - not because of divine decree, but because of our shallow conclusions and restless desires.

Mind is like a Field

Realization is by Negation

Ultimately, the mind is a tool. We can use it to create a life of emotional turbulence, diminishing insight, and fleeting pleasures. Or, we can refine it into a calm, intelligent, and open vehicle - one that seeks what lies beyond mental constructs. Such a mind doesn't stop at surface-level truths but goes on until it recognizes the eternal and unchanging reality - *that which is not a creation of the mind*. Negation of the untruth is the way to the direct realization of that which is - in & by this very mind.

No wonder the *Gita* calls the mind a *Kshetra* - a fertile field where what we sow, we shall indeed reap.

Karma Yoga in Action

What exactly happens in Karma to make it a Yoga? We will try to briefly go into this interesting topic in this article.

Yoga has been defined by Gita as 'equanimity', *Samatvam Yoga Ucchyate*. Let me add more to it. It is more than just equanimity, it is rather equanimity+, meaning while retaining equanimity there is also

dynamic & creative action. It is therefore a dynamic equanimity, exuding intelligence, fulfillment and love for all. Life is full of ups & downs, so we will be inevitably facing potential vacillations all the time. We are always on the battlefront taking critical decisions.

Ups & Downs of Life

It is not exactly right to say that life is full of ups & downs, life is just life, really speaking things just 'are' - neither good or bad, no ups & downs specifically designed for anyone of us. Up & downs are relative to our aspired goals. We need a particular 'aspired' situation, and resolve to work for that. The very fact we aspire for something else means we have to change the existing

situation and create a new one. This is what brings the challenges and the so called ups & downs. So ups & downs are inevitable in the life of every aspiring individual. The moment we aspire for a cherished goal we as though create our own ups & downs, which obviously are not universal but just personal. Few situations are favorable and most of them are not. Our challenge and priority as a Karma Yogi is to retain our balance and not get buffeted into the fragmented world of likes & dislikes.

What is Equanimity?

Samatvam or equanimity is our capacity to retain our thoughtfulness and also emotional equilibrium - in the midst of challenges & turmoil. It is taking the graph of our IQ & EQ up & up - all the time. Many

situations will require that we need to feel the joys & pains of others, but deep down we remain the master and still act as a humane person. The capacity for retaining equanimity requires a deep selflessness. If at all our ultimate goals are just 'objective', and not 'subjective', then any & every extraneous things will definitely affect us or even break us, however, as the real goal of a Karma Yogi is basically 'subjective', there is always a challenge to put in a concerted effort to make our intellect sharp & thoughtful, and thereafter retain our Sraddha that 'deep down I am that one infinite divine substratum of the entire existence, and that the world is changing and is thus impermanent'. Retention of this sraddha 'all the time' is the real goal of a Karma Yogi.

Karma Yoga in Action

Goals of a Karma Yogi

A Karma Yogi initially works to polish their mind and sharpen their intellect and ultimately believe in the sraddha of Vedantic truths. For working in a challenging field, we do need some goals outside to work for, and we ideally choose that goal as per our education and aspirations. We do need challenges, big goals, ideally for the well-being of your institution or better still for the betterment of the world at large. Going in the karma-kshetra is always like going into the rough seas, but if your goal is to learn surfing you don't mind, rather welcome the big waves. It could be any ocean, we just need waves, ups & downs and if in the process we can do something for the betterment of the country or the world at large

then so much the better. Personal ambition is not the way of a Karma Yogi. Their real journey is within, so irrespective of the situations outside they can afford to be equanimous.

Bhakti and Karma Yoga

Combining total selflessness, yet remaining inspired is a tricky combination. Bhakti for Ishwara helps us to mix these two seemingly intractable condiments into an ideal recipe. A Karma Yogi works in the world not as a limited, insecure and petty individual, but as an instrument of God. In Sanatan Dharma every individual is like a son/daughter of God. Merely believing in the existence of a son of God changes the lives of many, just imagine if you your self are that child of God. We have to truly see

the existence of God and then be his messenger. Look at the world and there should be no question in this regard, as every effect has to have a cause - so the orderly & beautiful creation is the best proof of the existence of God . Being his instrument will be the end of all personal insecurities and the will of God become our heartfelt loving motivation. Inspired yet selfless.

Always choosing Shreya over Preya

Take up a challenge and then intelligently respond in the best possible manner. Responses are always on the basis of our personal priorities and perceptions. For a so called worldly person, not aware of the fundamental truths of life, the priority is greater aggrandizement and accumula-

tion of wealth, getting attached to things of comfort and pleasure etc., anything and everything which makes them more secure. However this is not the case with a Yogi. Their priority & perception is all about realizing their ever-existent secure, permanent & divine self. So their response is entirely different. Let us remember that a Yogi is not yet a Gyani, meaning an enlightened person, he sincerely believes in this goal, so he or she is always on a slippery turf. The turf of Preya and Sreya, that which is personally comfortable or that which is right. When they get a situation then the mind 'may' work for their own worldly betterment, and then their sraddha 'works of them' to rise above such individualistic considerations. This is the real critical moment, the real essence of a Karma Yoga. If the person takes

the side of adhyatmic sraddha rather than for ego-fulfillment - then the war has been won. Every moment we are on a war front, and these subjective priorities rule the roost. A life which is led continuously motivated by such goals gets firmly abided in this sraddha. While being in the field of Karma they remain detached from personal aspirations, and thus become a real sanyasi even in the field of action. Sanyas, Satvikta, Samatvam is their real goal - just by retaining their fundamental priorities and perceptions in the midst of our Mahabharat, not when there are no challenges. That's Karma Yoga. The only way to cleanse and beautify our minds.

Om Tat Sat

Dhyan in Gita

Meditation or Dhyan is a matter of great interest to all - believer or non-believer alike. Depending upon the priorities and goals of different people, they all see the profound role of our mind in the entire process of their pursuits. No wonder everyone suggests that Dhyan should become an integral part of our daily routine. The exact nature & methodology of Meditation too

varies. Let us briefly see what exactly Bhagwad Gita has to say in this regard.

Ch-6 is Dhyan Yoga

Chapter six of Bhagwad Gita is called as the Yoga of Meditation - Dhyan Yoga and also Atma-Saiyam Yoga. Interestingly Gita doesn't start immediately with practices of Meditation, and neither does Patanjali Maharshi in his well-known treatise - the Ashtanga Yoga (also called as the Yoga Sutras). In Ashtanga Yoga, Dhyan is the seventh stage. Even in the Bhakti Sampradaya the famous Navadha Bhakti given by Sri Ram to Shabari, Japa is not the starting point. It is the fifth step. However many prescribe it as a starting point. So obviously they are not talking about the Meditation as revealed by the great sages, but

someone's own system. We shall be limiting ourselves to what Bhagwad Gita is talking about.

Prepare the Mind

The first step which Krishna suggests is Bahiranga Sadhana. The preparation for Dhyana while in the field of action. A mind which is self-centered and anxiety-ridden is not the right mind for Meditation, whatever the methodology may be.

So the right suggestion is to let the plane get the right momentum before it can take off. This is where our day to day activities come into picture. Most of our time we are in the field of work, and if we keep on working for ego-fulfillment then basically we keep affirming that I am limited and

a wanting person. So we have already decided that 'I am limited'. So what will you discover in Meditation, nothing new. Let us learn to live lovingly and with righteousness. There is what is called the Preya path - which is the path of pleasure aka ego-fulfillment; and there is what is called as the Shreya Marg or the path of righteousness. Shreya Marg facilitates thoughtfulness and contemplation. So that's step number one.

Learn to be with yourself

If you wish to realize the truth of yourself, then don't be a man of crowd all the time. That is extrovertedness and implies that the source of lasting joy lies yonder and not within you. Learn to be with yourself, learn to be with nature, free of anxieties and just see the beauty of nature around.

Reduce your dependences, be tough with least possible crutches. That way you will be able to sit with yourself and observe the world within.

Master your Mind

Dont let the mind lead the way. Living a life of whims & fancies is like being a slave to your mind. Mind is a beautiful instrument and it works best under the direction of your understanding and convictions. Best way to master your mind is to resolve to do something which you know is better. Like Japa - thinking of all the blessings which God has showered on you and expressing heartfelt thanks to God - the one who has created you and this beautiful world. That is the basic essence of Japa. It is first step in managing the mind.

Know the Mind

Once you have managed your mind relatively, then comes the important question - What is this Mind? What are thoughts? Sit down quietly and observe the mind - to humbly know it. Why does mind wander, which all thoughts generally come in our minds. All this is important to know. They all reveal our conditionings, and ultimately we have to handle and even negate our conditionings. So learn to objectively observe your mind.

Finally appreciate the Thinker

All thoughts are prompted by a thinker, Dont by-pass the thoughts to appreciate the thinker, rather appreciate the thinker in & through the thoughts. It is this fellow alone who is bringing about he thoughts, and all

for its aspired aspirations. So thoughts alone reveal the truth of thinker. As long we remain that thinker the entry to world beyond is out of bounds for us. Appreciate the truth of thinker, that alone is the ego, the 'I'. Whatever we have been taking ourselves to be.

Jiva is Atma plus Conditionings

It is only when we first objectively appreciate the truth of our individuality that we realize all the notions and conditionings which we carry on our shoulder like our cross. Appreciating the notions as notions alone helps us to negate them. In fact that alone is negation. When we negate our deep-rooted notions then we are what we are. Gita asks us to aim to Be Yourself'. Having woken up to your truth - let no other

thoughts come thereafter. Just be yourself. See the timelessness of your self-effulgent existence. This is the real you. It transcends all yet pervades all. This fact is to be realized deeply. All this is in brief the Methodology of Meditation as revealed in the Bhagwad Gita and in fact in all Upanishads too.

Om Tat Sat

Vidit & Avidit

The word meaning of Vidit & Avidit

In the Kenopanishad, when a student requests his teacher to tell as to who enlivens the mind & sense organs, then first the teacher says that, which enlivens all our faculties can at best be called as mind of the mind, ear of the ear etc. This is because 'that' enlivener has no qualities like

any other object of the world. Every word generally used is just a relative pointer, not its description. Our faculties are not made to objectify it - for the simple reason that all faculties work in a very limited sphere. Really speaking our words and mind do not ever 'see' it. However, the teacher says I will share with you a very poignant pointer by which the seekers do realize it.

Pointer for the Self-Knowledge

Having made such background of the issue involved the Guru says that, that statement is - 'It is different from anything known, and is neither unknown too.' Anything known is called Vidit', while anything unknown is Avidit'. Now what we need to do is to first appreciate what all is implied by these words - vidit and avidit, and then

negate all of it, to open up the skies to realize 'it'.

Vidit is Known, Avidit is potentially known

All our knowledge gathered so far in our lives is 'vidit'. Anything which we are likely to know in future also will be vidit. What our faculties can and have till now known is all vidit. Now this is stupendous. The teacher is unequivocally saying that none of all this is the real truth, including our imaginations. In one stroke he has taken away everything upon which our life was based. This is what the Sruti says, this is logical too, and this is the truth of our experiences too. Afterall in spite of knowing everything we know till now, we may be called a wise person with respect to our respective fields, but it is indeed the truth that we are still seeking

& probing. Nothing has really helped us in that direction.

Role & Benefits of Apara Vidya

However, to be fair to all what we have, or, anyone anywhere has known does have a role to play. Upanishads dont negate the relevance of knowing the perceptible world properly. It could be any field, any specialization, it helps in various ways. It helps to polish our intellectual acumen, it helps to serve the world in that particular field in some better way. Doctors, engineers, lawyers etc, all highly specialized people help the people around in profound way - not completely but definitely in much better way than us. This knownledge of the vidit world is called Apara Vidya, and Mundakopanishad say that it needs to

respected and pursued too. However, never let any such doubt come in your mind that jusy because you know the working of our liver etc in a much better way than me, then you know God too. Obviousy that is ridiculous. This is what is being revealed here. Apara Vidya is good to serve the world and good to polish your intellectual faculties, but never be too satisfied with just that, else simply speaking you are not a seeker of the ultimate truth. You make your living by Apara Vidya, so do pursue it, but remain humble and keep exploring.

From Avidit to Vidit

All pursuits of knowledge is all about uncovering the veil of ignorance on anything in the world. Initially it is avidit, then we resolve to uncover the truth and lo, one

day we realize it, and it becomes vidit. So avidit is basically 'potentially vidit', if not by me but by anyone anywhere. If anything can be made vidit, then basically it is 'objectifiable', 'appreciable' thing. That is what the Sruti negates. It says anything which is avidit today, is not knowing - for this goal. Obviously, the same sruti has said elsewhere that Apara Vidya has a role to play but not for knowing the timeless truth. Never ever fall in this trap that by knowing some 'object' you will know the truth of the 'subject' as well. There is no correlation in both.

Vidit & Avidit - are all worldly objects

Everything in the world, mind you 'in the world' is either vidit or avidit. So whenever we are in this realm then basically we

are extrovert and just knowing the awesome world or some of its part. However, now we know what to do if at all we wish to know the timeless truth of life, which is also the truth of the 'subject, of 'me'. Keep aside everything vidit or avidit - empty your mind by just realizing that till now making a living was more of my priority.

Implication of this statement

Now if at all we wish something permanent & timeless, then peeping outside the window will not work. Just be, droping all roles which we don to fulfill our worldly responsibilities & aspirations. This simple task at times becomes the most tricky one. We realize that we were literally hypnotized by things outside and we have almost lost our freedom to keep just quiet. Truth of 'I' is get-

ting revealed even today. Real freedom is what just our capacity to do something, but includes our capacity 'not to do anything' too. So quietitude of the mind, while keeping it free from all vidit and avidit is what revals our own truth. Really speaking we dont reveal it, the ever-effulgent truth reveals itself. We just have to uplift ourselves to that realm - that is the essence of this profound statement.

Om Tat Sat

Vedanta Ashram

www.vmission.org.in

E mail : vmission@gmail.com